

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) has introduced H.R. 6928, the After School Partnerships Improve Results in Education (ASPIRE) Act, which seeks to provide funding for after school programs for middle and high school students in order to improve academic achievement, reduce drop-out rates, and increase interest in high-demand careers.

“After school programs are critical as we seek to prepare students to meet educational benchmarks and get on a path to professional success. My bill creates a space for local solutions, especially partnerships with trade, technical and business organizations. Before students consider or enter college, we must take steps to encourage interest in technology jobs and other growing industries,” said **Congresswoman McCollum**.

Currently almost 14 million students do not have a place to go after school hours, and nearly one-third of those in high school fail to graduate. Lack of interest in the curriculum and lack of relevancy to their future career plans are consistently cited as reasons for dropping out, according to recent studies. After school programs provide extra time for educational enrichment, skills development and can help increase retention rates.

“The goals of the ASPIRE ACT: improving academic achievement, reducing drop-out rates,

and increasing student interest in high-demand careers are being reached by students in career technical education programs throughout the country. I am pleased that ASPIRE will support another avenue, after school programs, for students to further explore careers and have the opportunity to be exposed to rigorous and relevant career technical programs,” said **Kimberly Green**

Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc).

The legislation seeks to make sure every student has the opportunity to learn and explore various career tracks. The ASPIRE Act also authorizes a national demonstration project to create multi-state, multi-site after-school programs and has requirements for tracking and evaluation. There will be significant efforts made to include the bill in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act during the next Congressional session.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) serves on the Appropriations Committee and the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

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